

**TOWN OF WELLESLEY
Advisory Committee**



**Town Hall
525 Washington Street
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482**

**Vice Chair
Caren Parker**

**Chair
Jack Haley**

**Secretary
Virginia Ferko**

February 19, 2011

To: School Committee

From: Jack Haley - Chair, Advisory Committee

Cc: Advisory Committee Members
Board of Selectmen

Re: Advisory Committee Reports to the Annual Town Meeting

Advisory is in the process of preparing its Reports to the Annual Town Meeting. We are planning on commenting on a number of areas including the Town Wide Financial Plan ("TWFP") and the School Administration's current approach in sharing information and providing answers to specific questions on a timely basis. We believe these comments will help improve the transparency of the School Budget in future years.

We respectfully submit the following requests which will be used to supplement our comments in the Reports to the Annual Town Meeting and allow us to complete our work on the FY12 School Budget. Please provide your responses in writing by the dates noted below.

1. TWFP - Assumptions used in TWFP for FY13-FY16 – The School Committee provided projected budget increases for the School operating budget exclusive of STTI for the TWFP. The percentage increases provided includes macro assumptions used to prepare these projections. We need to understand the detail analysis and actual assumptions used to prepare these projections. Please provide the detail analysis and assumptions used to prepare these projections. We would be happy to sit down with School Administration to walk through these details. In addition, the FY13 budget includes estimated incremental costs of operating the new high school. Please reconcile these estimates to the original operating costs estimates that were prepared in 2008 on a line by line basis.

Please provide this information on or before February 28, 2011.

2. Information Request - On January 9, 2011, Advisory issued a written request to School Administration. The letter included the following request.

“Please provide the detail support used to prepare the FY11 and FY12 Operating/Facilities and STTI Budgets, including related worksheets/workbooks, Excel files, data accumulation files and supporting documentation used by School Administration to prepare the budget information presented in both the FY11 Budget and FY12 Recommended Budget. The FY12 information is the highest priority item. We do not need any additional preparation or analysis of these materials.”

Although Advisory has received certain pieces of this information in the responses to Advisory's submitted questions and specific information requests, it has not received the details support requested above. As a result, Advisory has not been able to complete its duties of analyzing the FY12 School Operating Budget.

Please provide School Committee's written response on or before March 1, 2011.

3. Ad hoc School Budget Committee - Throughout the summer of 2010, a small group of volunteers developed a series of recommendations on how the School's budgeting process and disclosures could be improved. This included the accumulation of a number of peer Town School budgets which could serve as a model for Wellesley. The purpose of this effort was to improve the transparency of the School's budgeting process and supporting assumptions used in preparing this critically important component of the Town's overall budget. To date, the majority of these recommendations have not been adopted. The FY12 budget document was similar in format and content to the budgets submitted in FY11 and FY10.

Please provide the School Committee's written comments on or before March 2, 2011.